

Cracked

by Sillycritter

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Summary: Something's wrong with Rick, but he won't say why. Things get bad very quickly. Rated M for slightly graphic descriptions of sexual violence, PTSD, severe depression, alcoholism/drugs and general depravity. (You have been forewarned.) This is not a ship fic; it is ultimately a story of healing. Feedback is always welcome & appreciated. Post "Close Encounters of the Rick Kind".

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*Disclaimer: \*\***Just in case you haven't guessed, I don't own "Rick and Morty".

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***This story-at some point-will contain mention and possible graphic descriptions of **\*\*sexual violence\*\*** and **\*\*PTSD\*\*** (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), **\*\*severe depression\*\*** and **\*\*alcoholism/drug addiction\*\***. (Don't worry, though, it won't have a sad ending and help will be received.) This is, however, why it is **\*\*rated M\*\***. You have been warned.

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\_Something wasn't right. \_

It was keeping Morty up at night.

Something wasn't right with Rick and he wanted to know why.

Because lately, Morty had begun to get the feeling that something was secretly bothering Rick, and it was beginning to interfere with their daily lives. For one thing, Rick was becoming incredibly distant; they hardly did anything together anymore. It was getting so bad that they hadn't been on a trip in quite some time together, and Rick was spending more and more time alone in the garage.

Until one day when, finally, Rick asked Morty to come along to Planet Beta 57 to score some radioactive and holographic crystals that he needed for a project, and, in the midst of retrieving the crystals, they were ambushed by the planet's inhabitants.

Suddenly, they were surrounded, and Morty looked to Rick for help.

And that's when it happened:

Rick-the man who knew how to get out of any situation possible, who always had the answers to everything-

\_froze\_.

The man who who was Morty's best friend, someone who Morty loved liked a brother, looked up to, and trusted with his life-just stood there, unmoving, like he'd just seen a ghost.

"R-r-Rick?" Morty was backing up, both bewildered and terrified, "Wh-what in the hell are you-"

"RUN!" Rick bellowed at the top of his lungs without warning and, in spite of Morty's pleading-and, since Morty \_always\_ listened to Rick on a mission, they ran-ran like he'd never run before, through the ship's corridors, and the horrifying looking creatures were quickly gaining on them, almost upon them.

In a matter of seconds they were completely surrounded.

"Oh my God-\_Riiick\_!" Morty cried out, as they began backing up towards the wall, wondering why on Earth Rick was just \_standing\_ there, instead of kicking the aliens' asses like he usually would. Instead, Morty saw an expression on Rick's face like he'd never seen-and it scared him shitless.

The look on Rick's face was one of pure utter terror.

"\_Rick\_!" Morty hissed in an almost-whisper through clenched teeth, "y-you gotta \_do\_ something-these, these guys-they're gonna \_kill\_ us!"

Amazingly, Rick didn't respond-and Morty suddenly realized that nothing was going to happen if he didn't do something first-so Morty did the only thing he could think of to do: he dug his hand into Rick's lab coat and snatched the man's laser gun. Before he knew what was happening, Morty had shot down several of the aliens and was pulling hard at Rick's arm, practically dragging him in the direction of the ship's exit.

When they had finally reached Rick's ship, Morty shoved his what appeared to be a nearly dazed grandfather into the driver's seat, and he quickly joined him in the passenger's seat. Rick finally seemed to come out of whatever stupor he'd been in, starting the engine and shooting them back up into the atmosphere (much to Morty's relief).

When they were finally at a safe distance, Morty tossed the bag of crystals in the back with triumph, but the victory was short-lived as Rick slowed down the car, strangled to open the driver seat window

and, once it was open, puked violently over the side.

"..Rick?..." Morty tried to pretend he didn't notice as his grandfather heaved with oblivion several times into empty space. ".you, uhâ€|.you okay, bud-buddyâ€|?" He wasn't sure why but he suddenly felt a lot older in a few seconds' time, as he gently patted his shaking grandfather's side.

"...yeah," Rick finally answered as he turned around at last, still looking a bit green under the gills as he faced the controls, not looking in Morty's direction. "...let's...just get out of here," Rick said then, simply, without any explanation, as he started the ship off for home.

Morty didn't say anything the whole ride back, and Rick didn't either-it was clear that, whatever had hapened back there, that Rick was pretty embarrassed by it, and Morty knew right then wasn't the time.

Rick avoided Morty for the rest of the week like the plague, and Morty-even though he was bored out of his wits-tried to do the same.

Then one night Morty was woken by screaming, and it was a scream that was so loud and jarring that it was something he just couldn't ignore.

The screams were coming from Rick's room. (Somehow, only Morty had been the one woken up by the screams-everybody else probably could have slept through a war zone.) Morty raced down the hall to his grandfather's bedroom, and was petrified when, upon opening the door, he found Rick flailing about on the bed, as though trying to fight off something invisible.

"RICK!" Morty shouted as he ran into the room, trying to grasp hold of his grandfather's wrists. He was mortified; he'd never seen Rick like this, and it took nearly all his strength to not scream for help from his parents or sister.

Rick, meanwhile, nearly rolled right off the bed in spite of Morty's efforts as he continued to punch and slap the air, screaming all kinds of obscenities, the likes that Morty had never heard of.

"RICK!" Morty shouted, as he continued to wrestle with him, "w-wake up! You, you're having a night-nightmare!" But try though he might, he couldn't seem to bring Rick out of the throes of whatever internal battle he was having at that moment.

Morty realized then that the only way he was ever going to get Rick to snap out of this craziness would be to do the inevitable: and he retracted one hand before, with all his might, slapping Rick full-force in the face.

Rick screamed, and opened his eyes, and when he saw Morty, his terrified expression turned to one full of rage-and, with a force of energy unlike Morty had ever seen before, shoved Morty off of him and, in one fell swoop, Morty was propelled backwards and onto the floor.

"J-Jesus f-fucking \_Christ\_, Morty!" Rick bellowed as he snatched Morty up off the ground with half his shirt in Rick's fist, "what the fuck are you doing in my room!?"

"I-I'm sorry!" Morty somehow managed to blurt out in spite of the near choke-hold that Rick had on him, "I-I heard you sc-screaming a-and I-I-"

"GET OUT!" Rick screamed and something was thrown in his general direction; Morty ducked.

"Are you f-fucking deaf, Morty?! I \_SAID-'Get the hell out'! \_" Before Morty knew what was happening Rick had tossed him halfway across the room, before yanking him up and pushing him right out the door-and then, subsequently, slamming it hard, in his face.

"..Rick...?" Morty stood alone in the hallway in front of the closed door. There wasn't any answer. Morty stood there for some time, hating the tears that threatened to tug at his eyelashes, and hating himself for caring about Rick at all.

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Disclaimer:\*\*** As always, I don't own "Rick and Morty".

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***This story will get dark very quickly-it is not one for the feint of heart, so be prepared. This chapter contains physical abuse, so if that is a **\*\*psychological\*\*** **\*\***(be it mental, physical or emotional) trigger **\*\***for you, please do not read. Later chapters will mention memories of sexual abuse (but don't worry, it is not of Morty either present or past). I don't normally write stories like this, but felt this story needed to be told, no matter how uncomfortable it makes me to write it.

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Things were getting a whole lot stranger, and not in a better wayâ€|.in fact, a whole week had gone by with Rick barely saying two words to Morty, and Morty was beginning to get more and more uneasy.

"Mom?" Morty spoke up timidly over a bowl of "Toasty-O's".

"Yes, Morty?" His mother was reading the morning paper. They were the only ones at the table that morning; Summer was holed up in the bathroom getting herself ready for school (did she ever eat?) and his father was-like most mornings these days-still sleeping. (So, it seemed, was Rick, as he had as yet to join them at the table, and Morty was too uncomfortable with checking in on him.)

"Do you think Rick's been...kinda acting, uh, I dunno, a little, uh, strange-lately?" Morty asked in almost a mumble. He hated asking stupid questions. He hated being 'stupid' in general. Most of all he hated having to use his mother's feedback as backup that he wasn't losing his mind.

"Well, Morty, Dad's always been kind of 'strange'," his mother said with a hint of amusement in her voice; nevertheless, she'd put down

the paper, and was staring at him pointedly, as if trying to figure out where this was coming from. "Why do you ask?"

"Umâ€¦" Morty toyed awkwardly with his susages. "...it's justâ€¦" \_How should he put this? \_"He doesn't really...\_do\_ things with meâ€¦.anymore."

"Well, honeyâ€¦." His mother's amusment (and clearly feined concern) was beginning to irk him. "It's probably because he's just, well, getting old, Morty."

\_She wasn't getting it. \_It wasn't because he was 'getting old', Morty knew; Rick had always acted younger than most people his age (\_how old was he anyway?\_). This was someting else-something that Morty couldn't place his finger on-and it was beginning to change how Rick responded to his very presence in their lives. There was no way to explain his relationship with Rick; his parents didn't even know about the whole "cloaking device" scenario that Rick claimed was his 'purpose' in their relationship (though Morty knew better; he was destined for bigger things). There was going to be no explaining the way his grandfather had frozen in front of a bunch of alien creatures when on any other day he would gotten them out of dodge in no time flat.

There was no explaining because nobody knew his grandfather like Morty did.

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He woke to darkness, no shadows or light.

\_Oh God oh God oh God-I can't see! I'm blind-can't see-I'm blind-can't see-\_

\_What on Earth was happening?\_ He couldn't see anything-he was awake, but he couldn't see anything. He was sitting up in bed-that much he knew- but everthing around him was completely pitch black. He blinked; still black. \_I'm dreaming, I'm dreaming-it's a dream, I'm just dreaming-\_

His breaths began coming in shallow spurts, and it was getting hard to breath. In a panic, he brought his hands up to his face-cloth-it was a piece of cloth-a piece of \_cloth \_was covering his face-why on Earth was there \_cloth\_ covering his face? Terror seizing him, Morty ran his trembling fingers up and down the piece of fabric-a bandana?-it was tied all around his head. He moved to untie it and a voice broke the heavy silence:

"Put-your hands-\_down\_." \_What the-?\_

The voice was Rick's, but it didn't sound like Rick. Morty felt his heartbeat quicken; why was he blindfolded, and why was Rick talking to him in this way? Panic rising further, he moved again towards the back of his head, but a quick blow to his side sent him sprawling on the ground. A yelp of pain erupted from Morty as he lay shivering on the floor of his bedroom.

"Get up." Rick's voice again, in a low, unfamiliar growl. There was a coldness there that Morty had never heard before, and upon hearing it Morty began to whimper.

Morty forced himself to look up in the direction of the voice, "R-r-r-Rick-?" Instead of answering, nother swift kick to his side made Morty gasp and shake in shock.

"Rick-\_stop\_!" Another kick. "Stop-!" Another.

By this time, Morty was crying. Where was his parents? Was his mother already at work? Had his sister left for school? Was his Dad still at work? Why was Rick hurting him? This wasn't like the Rick he knew-the Rick he knew would never do something like this!

"Get on your feet." No recognition; it was like he was a stranger.

"Rickâ€|" Morty was sobbing uncontrollably at his point, rocking and hugging his body to keep himself from falling apart completely, "Rick!...it's m-m-m-\_me\_â€|."

"Get up," came the same growl, sounding even colder than before, "Now."

When Morty didn't move, a rough yank to his arm pulled him violently back up to his feet, and suddenly Morty couldn't hold back any longer; he vomited at once on the carpet.

"Shit! Gross! Watch the shoes! \_Disgusting\_!" A hard \_slap\_ to Morty's face left a lingering sting on his skin, and he swayed dangerously, trying to keep himself from vomiting yet again. He didn't apologize (what would be the point?). He kept silent, trembling, waiting for the next blow. \_I'm gonna wake up soon, this is just a crazy nightmare, I'm gonna wake up. \_Although no matter how surreal this felt, the pain was too real. \_Was this really happening?

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"Walk this way," came Rick's low voice. "\_Don't\_. \_Scream.\_"

A cold hard object suddenly met the square middle of his back, and Morty went rigid.

\_Yes, \_Morty thought with a sinking sensation, \_This is not a dream.

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Slowly, he began to plod towards the direction of his bedroom doorway, with Rick's gun pressing against his spine, Rick's footsteps right behind.

\_This was really happening. \_

### 3. Chapter 3

**\*\*Disclaimer: \*\***I don't own "Rick and Morty".

**\*\*Author's Note:\*\*** This chapter will contain some disturbing images with regards to sexual assault and general abuse. Expect Rick to be a bit OOC (there is a reason for this). This is not a typical fanfic for me to write; I usually don't go down this dark of a rabbit hole. You have been forewarned.

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When the bandana was lifted, Morty was stunned into silence as he looked around, suddenly finding himself in what looked like some secret lab. "Wh-what? Where are we? How did we-"

"Yeah," Rick said drably with a half-hearted shrug, "big whoopdido, you've discovered my secret lair. All the cool guys have 'em. And, and you know what Morty? They also make the most amazing torture chambers of all time!"

Morty froze, his heart leapt nearly all the way up his throat, "Wh-wh-what? Tort-tortureâ€|?"

"Oh, come on, don't look so surprised, Morty." His grandfather sneered as, without warning, a mechanical hand reached out from the wall, clamped around Morty's waste, and pulled him up against the wall, locking him in place with metal clasps to his wrists and ankles.

"R-Rick!" Morty croaked out in spite of his former resolve to stay silent, eyes wide as he stared down at himself in shock, "Wh-wh-what are you doing!?"

"Geeze, are you really that stupid, Morty?" To Morty's horror, Rick threw his head back and began laughing uncontrollably. "You, you thought you could just, I dunno, get away with all that crazy fucked-up shit\_ you did to me?"

"What! What 'crazy, fucked up shit'?! " Morty was horrified. He couldn't, for the life of him, make sense of any of this. His grandfather wasn't making any sense at all, and he was terrified, fearing what his grandfather would do next.

"You, you know what you did, Morty!" Rick was shouting in his face, spit flying in all directions, "you, you know what you did!"

"WHAT!? Rick! I didn't do anything!" Morty cried incredulously, "Have you completely lost your mind!?"

"Guess we'll find out soon enough eh Mortimer?" Rick sneered as he took some kind of device Morty had never seen before-it looked like a virtual reality helmet-and began to advance towards Morty with a wicked grin. "You see this, Morty? It, it's my latest invention! It stores all of your deepest, darkest fears and secrets-and then plays it back for all to see!"

"...oh noâ€|" Morty shut his eyes, cringing as Rick began to attach the helmet to his head.

"Don't even try Morty," Rick warned him with that same eery coldness like before, "it holds your eyelids open the whole time Morty-so you have no other choice but to face the music."

"R-R-Rick-" Morty whimpered, but was silenced as quickly as the words flew from his mouth as a screen appeared before him, and on the screen, was himself-standing in front of his entire class-shivering and-naked.

"OH!" Morty cried out, gasping with horror as everyone in the class

began laughing, "Oh-no, no-no-make them stop!"

"Terrifying-isn't it, Morty?" Rick sneered. "This isn't even the half of it."

Morty's stomach lurched horribly, threatening to explode as he was forced to watch and listen to all of his classmates-including Jessica-and his teacher-laugh in his face, their faces getting closer and closer, their laughter getting louder and louder-

"RICK!" Morty screamed, "STOP! \_Make-it-stop\_"

"Not a chance Morty-that's the least of what you deserve."

"\_Rick\_" Morty continued to scream as the laughing began to invade his eardrums with an endless, relentless chatter, "\_RIIIICK\_"

He received no answer.

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\_The bright light shone down relentlessly on him; the cool metal table welcoming under his skin. \_

\_The relief was short-lived, as he felt rough hands grasping his arms, pushing him heavily downwards, slamming his face, hard, against the table, barely able to breath through his mouth as it pressed hard into the metal, and a rough voice in his ear, ordering simply, yet harshly, a single, inavoidable word: "Strip."\_

\_He knew there was no way out of thisâ€¦.\_

â€¦\_.this was the point of no return. \_

\_Slowly-as slow as he could-he did what he was told-as he heard the voice again, and felt the other man's body pressing into him, felt that familiar pressure pushing urgently, and gratingly, against his skin. Smelled that familiar scent of sweat and stale liquor.

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\_Again, he heard that familar voice, urging him, demanding him-"Do what I said, Sanchez. Now." \_

\_And he knew better than to disobey the voice. \_

\_The same voice he knew only too wellâ€¦.\_

â€¦\_.the voice that was his very own. \_

#### 4. Chapter 4

**\*\*Disclaimer: \*\***I don't own "Rick and Morty"

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***Let me know if anything feels too overdone here. I'm trying to keep Rick in character, but it's tough considering where his mind is at, and with everything he's been through. Once again, this is Rated M for graphic descriptions of disturbing images; this one gets pretty dark.



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Locking the door to his lab had never been so satisfying.

Rick stuffed in earplugs, crookedly smiling to himself as he swiftly shut the door behind him. \_That ought to do it for awhile. \_He'd leave Morty in there overnight and for at least another day, before putting him in the "holding chamber". (Oh, it was so good listening to that kid screamâ€¦) Rick chuckled to himself at the memory, the screams still fresh in his mind. Had the kid actually thought he wouldn't know that he'd killed his original Morty? Like he wouldn't notice this Morty wasn't the original-that he'd swapped himself with his dead alternate, so as to sneak up on Rick and cause him further unimaginable kinds of pain?

No-he wouldn't think about that-it was time for a drink. Or maybe, two. (Or three.) Maybe a pill or two to ward off the headaches. They were more like migraines, but what did it matter? Beth always kept ample amounts of painkillers in the medicine cabinet and she was always working anyway.

So, time for a drink, but first, he had to take a shower-he had to wash the Morty off of him.

Rick undressed and stood in front of the mirror in the bathroom, letting the steam fill the room so he wouldn't have to look at himself-at the scars that covered his body, at the bruises that Morty had inflicted upon himâ€¦.That sick, disgusting bastard had used a technique that even Rick had been unprepared for-he'd enlisted his own Rick, Rick D-132 or some shit, whom this Morty had somehow managed to gain complete mind control over-to inflict the abuse upon Rick himself. That was after he'd kidnapped Rick (tasered him unconscious) after portaling into Rick's own bedroom. Upon first sight in the crazy Morty's chambers, he'd watched the new Morty kill \_his\_ Morty, slashing him right in front of Rick's very own eyes-(he hadn't even known Morty had been kidnapped too)-and then-and then-the other Rick had-

His head swimming with unwanted memories still too painful to comprehend, Rick could barely make it to the toilet before emptying his stomach entirely of its contents, dropping to his knees and heaving over the bowl.

"...Rickâ€¦?" A worried knock came at the door, followed by a timid, "...you okay?"

" 'm fine," he spat. \_Fucking Jerry. Always getting in his business.

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"...Okayâ€¦" Finally, the sound of Jerry's retreating footsteps could be heard.

Rick sat shaking in front of the bowl, barely able to lift his hand to flush it, his stomach curling in on itself and threatening to unload on him yet again. \_Even his own body was beginning to betray him. \_Getting up on shaking feet, Rick stood in front of the mirror once again, staring at his own reflection, hating the image that stared blankly back at him. \_You're such an old man-you couldn't even fight back, \_he thought to himself bitterly, in spite of himself. \_You're just as weak as he wasâ€¦.Morty couldn't save himself,

either. \_

Getting into the shower, he turned the hose on full blast, shutting the glass door behind him, and turned the heat up as far as it could go. Sticking his face directly under the hot pelting streams of water, Rick bit his lip hard enough to draw blood, letting the water shoot down his kneck and his back. \_Pain, it seemed, was the only distraction from that other kind of pain-the pain that he didn't want-and simply refused-to remember. \_

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"NO!" Morty choked out brokenly, "DON'T TOUCH ME! \_STOP!\_ DON'T!  
\_\*\*STOP \*\*\_"

It was no use; King Jellybean was on him, and Morty felt the slime of the creature's saliva in his own mouth, and the man's hands was moving downwards, down, down, down-

"\_\*\*STOP! \*\*\_" Morty cried, breaking down as the IT happened-and King Jellybean was doing the most awful thing in the world to him-it was indescribable-and there was so much pain-Morty screamed, and kept screaming-he was clawing and pushing continuously at the creature slobbering all over him but there was no point, he was just a piece of used meat to this \_thing\_-

Suddenly, the screen went black, and Morty felt his body go limp as he hung by the chains, sobbing uncontrollably as the images seemed to swallow him whole.

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It took a whole day for the family to realize Morty was missing.

"...Where's Morty?" asked Summer as the family sat together at the dining room table.

"Probably in his room?" Rick suggested as he shoveled down his food.

Summer excused herself to go look, then came back looking worried. "He's...not in there," she said with a confused look of concern on her face.

"Mmm...maybe the garage?" Rick tore off a piece of chicken thigh.

"That's where \_you\_ usually are," Jerry reminded him with a pointed stare.

"Dad-when was the last time you saw Morty?" Beth asked her father with growing concern.

"What?" Rick snapped, "Why you asking me? Am I his brother's keeper?"

"No-it's just that-I-" Beth blushed, "Jerryâ€|.?"

"Hmmm," said Jerry, "come to think of itâ€|.I forgot to tell him

goodnightâ€¦|.Summer? When did you see Morty?"

"You guys are SO ridiculous!" Summer slammed her phone down on the table, "Isn't it obvious what's going on!? Morty's run away!"

"What?!" both her parents exclaimed simultaneously.

"No-that's not true-it just can't be," Beth said, and burst into tears. "Oh no Jerry! What are we gonna do?"

"Call the circus," Rick suggested, "Put his face on a milk carton?"

"DAD!" Beth bellowed, "We have to call the police! Morty is \_missing\_! Don't be glib!"

"Okay, okay!" Rick muttered as he pushed himself up from the table, "well, looks like you guys have it all under control-I'll be in the office," he added, leaving the table as quickly as possible (thankfully the rest of his family were either too shocked or too involved with arguing with one another about what to do next to notice).

Once inside the lab, Rick took the device off Morty's head; the kid was passed out, probably from a mixture of shock and exhaustion. He'd have to get the kid a change of clothes soon; the lab was beginning to stink of stale sweat and urine (at some point-disgustingly-Morty seemed to have wet his pants).

Morty must have met his biggest fear, because the device had turned itself off, and it was designed to go from smallest to largest in a span of only a few hoursâ€¦|.he'd find out Morty's biggest fear once he reviewed the content later. It was going to be great food for thought. Because, if only Morty knew what he had planned, he would be begging to have him put the device back on again-

â€¦|...for the biggest event was still yet to come.

\*\*Just so you know, there is only so much I will let Rick do to Morty (I feel bad even having him do what he's done). Right now, Rick is in a bad, bad way, and it's going to take some changing to get him back to his sensesâ€¦|..because so far, it's not too late! \*\*

## 5. Chapter 5

\*\*Disclaimer:\*\* I don't own "Rick and Morty".

\*\*Author's Note:\*\* This chapter was inspired by a fan theory regarding a segment that takes place in the opening theme scenes, but I added a bit to it for the story.

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When it was over, the other Rick stood up. "Dress," he ordered simply.

It was all Rick could do to hold back a scream. His mind was buzzing;

his lips felt numb. He'd just been violated in the worst possible way, and it was a feeling that he'd never felt before-before this, it was unimaginable that anything like this could happen to Rick Sanchez. Things like this just didn't happen to this Rick Sanchez-who could do \_no\_ \_wrong\_.

His ass felt as if it had been pulled apart and injected with hot steel, and all he wanted was to either curl up into a ball or vanish into thin air. Meanwhile this-this-\_animal\_ stood behind him, tapping his foot as though impatient with him for not obeying his order quicker. "\_Now\_", Rick," the other Rick demanded in an icy cold tone that he'd never heard from any Rick before.

Rick fought back bile as he bit back the only words that he could muster: "F-f-f-\_fuck you\_." Almost immediately, a swift jolt to his stomach sent him flying to the ground. Rick lay on the floor, struggling to breath-\_I won't-I \_can't\_-give them the satisfaction of seeing me break. \_

(How could a man whose psyche was supposed to be a carbon copy of his own act in such unfathomably inhumane ways?)

"Rick."

That voice-Morty's voice-it sent chills down Rick's spine, all the way to his gut-Morty was standing over him now. "Get dressed, Rick." Rick blinked with surprise: \_Where was his stutter?\_

It took what little motivation and dignity Rick had left to push himself back up to his feet, as he nimbly stood on both legs; they shook in spite of himself. He was all too aware of two pairs of eyes staring at him, and his hands flew to his groin in an effort to cover himself.

Rick forced himself to stare into Morty's eyes-and halted-rather, it was one eye; the other was covered with an eye patch. The other eye stared deeply down into Rick's own, with a calculating glower that made Rick's stomach sink like a stone. "M-Morty..." Rick had to push the words out through his lips that shook in spite of himself, "Wh...why?"

A bitter laugh escaped Morty's own lips in response, shocking Rick into silence-Morty never laughed like that. "You really haven't figured it out yet, Rick?"

Rick couldn't respond. He stared blankly back at Morty, who seemed, aside from a mixture of amusement and resentment, appeared to be entirely emotionless, if not for what Rick could only deem...hatred.

"This, Rick," said Morty, "is...payback."

Rick, still covering himself, felt all the color drain at once from his face.

At the sight of Rick's face and demeanor, the one-eyed Morty laughed even harder. "Wow Rick. For a genius, you can be pretty stupid huh?" Shaking his head with an almost cackling chuckle, Morty switched on a monitor; to his astonishment, Rick saw himself-and Morty-running across a barren landscape. Two monsters were chasing them.

"What the...?" Rick choked out. He didn't recall this.

"See-that's you," the One-Eyed Morty said as he pushed the monitor towards Rick, "and-that's me-before you opened a portal and \_ditched me\_ to fend off the monsters \_by-my-self\_."

Rick watched, appalled, as the Rick on the screen jumped through the portal, and the portal closed up, leaving the other Morty behind: with two huge green frog-like monsters quickly gaining on him.

"It was by luck only that I was rescued in time, Rick," said One-Eyed Morty, as he switched off the monitor-the image of the terrified Morty staring at the ground where the portal had vanished, searing itself to Rick's brain-and Rick felt a hollow opening expanding inside his own chest.

"I-I didn't-I-I-I wouldn't-" Rick stammered, knowing that it wasn't him-he'd never do anything like that to Morty-but this Morty seemed to think he had.

"SHUT UP!" A hard slap to Rick's face sent him spiraling towards the table, and he barely caught himself in time, hands flying out just before the impact. "You left me there to DIE-you never even came back to check on me!" It was rage now, no longer silenced by cold seething anger, and Rick felt himself caving, knowing there was no way he could convince this Morty otherwise. "You just went and got yourself another Morty-you just \_left \_me!"

"I-I-I-I'm \_sorry\_-" Rick choked out, not even caring how pathetic he sounded; it didn't matter either way, because this Morty was not going to believe him, it seemed, no matter what he did. But he had to try, if he was ever going to get out of this alive.

" You're '\_sorry\_' Rick!? HA-well that's rich," Morty sneered at him, snickering devillishly. "Well I'm sorry Rick-this time, 'sorry's' just won't cut it! Put him in the chamber. I'm going to bed."

Before Rick could say another word, the other Rick had slapped handcuffs on him and grabbed him roughly by the waste, sending pangs of terror through Rick's body. He felt his heart thumping wildly as he shouted, "Wait! M-M-M-Morty wait-" He couldn't say any more-a handkerchief had been stuffed deep inside his mouth, and Rick gagged as he struggled desperately just to breath. "Silence," said the other Rick stonily. "Opening your mouth will only lead to regret. Now-dress."

There wasn't anything to do then except what he was told. In spite of being handcuffed, Rick somehow managed to get himself back into his pants and T-shirt ("Leave the jacket," the other Rick ordered coldly when he went to retrieve his lab coat) and Rick shivered as he obeyed. Without a word, the other Rick grasped his arm, and led him silently from the room.

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Rick sat up with a jolt, still reeling from the nightmares; his entire body was drenched in sweat.

When he could finally move, he crept out of his bedroom and took the

elevator down to the lab.

Morty was still standing-kind of-more like slumped-against the wall. He didn't move when Rick entered. Blood ran down one arm; Rick figured he'd probably injured himself trying to escape. He recalled the pain of metal against his wrists as he'd struggled. Rick went over to the boy, checking his airways, listening for a pulse-still breathing. He was asleep, just sleeping; he'd be fine once Rick let him have water; maybe some food soon, if he was good.

He knew this would be painful, but he didn't expect to feel real guilt for any of it. Looking at Morty now, he felt a dull, almost sharp twinge in his chest, that only came to him on a very rare occasions. \_If only he'd just let me apologize...if only I could have made it right...I would have never taken things this far. \_

End  
file.